

Persuading Congress

By Joseph Gibson
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Reviewed by Dawn Chase

For people whose impressions of Congress come from tabloid newscasts and comedy shows, Joseph H. Gibson's *Persuading Congress* offers a change of pace — an easy-to-read, down-to-earth primer on how to get business done on Capitol Hill.

Virginia lawyer Gibson, formerly chief minority counsel to the House Judiciary Committee, now has an antitrust, intellectual property, and governmental relations practice with Constantine Cannon LLP in Washington, D.C.

The book largely focuses on people — the roles of members of Congress, their staffs, and the federal agency employees who influence the lawmaking process.

He describes outside influences — the president, the courts, the lobbyists, the media, the public. And he outlines the process.

The book is exquisitely organized, with bulleted summaries preceding the brief chapters.

The gist of Gibson's message: To persuade Congress, use your human relations skills. Know who does what. Be honest, fair, persistent, and patient. Build long-term relationships. Present your idea in a manner that will convince your audience that it is to his or her advantage. Establish alliances. Make sure the legislator gets credit for successes.

Persuading Congress could be a text for a civics class as well as a manual for advocates.

A Practical Guide to Parlaying an Understanding of Congressional Folkways and Dynamics into Successful Advocacy on Capitol Hill

How to Spend Less and Get More from Congress: Candid Advice for Executives

By Joseph Gibson



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Members of the Virginia State Bar who have recently published books may request a review by contacting Dawn Chase at chase@vsb.org.

Hopes of Persuading Congress. In textiles, another area where the domestic industry is sensitive, prices on imports from Japan could be cut by as much as 5.2 percent, and prices on European imports could be cut by as much as 4.8 percent, according to the analysis. The domestic steel and textile industries would get tariff cuts on products they sell in Europe and Japan, too, but American imports of those products far outweigh exports. Persuading Congress, by Joseph Gibson, is a very practical book, packed with wisdom and experience in a deceptively short and simple package. What happens in Congress affects all of our lives and extends into every corner of the economy. Because so much is at stake there, businesses and other interest groups spend billions of dollars each year trying to influence legislation. Yet, most of these efforts are doomed to futility from the outset.